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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 105, No. 1 (Jan., 2001), pp. 51-76

Published by: [Archaeological Institute of America](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/507326>

Accessed: 18/05/2012 21:43

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Nationalism, Politics, and the Development of Archaeology in Iran

KAMYAR ABDI

Abstract

The relationship between nationalism, politics, and the development and practice of archaeology has recently become a popular topic among archaeologists. This paper reviews the relationship between nationalism, political developments, and the rise and progress of archaeology in Iran from the mid 19th century to the present. The Iranian reaction to foreign interference is investigated here, and the role Iran's past has played in reinforcing nationalist sentiments is explored. It is argued that whenever the political situation provided a favorable environment, intellectuals and politicians, in various capacities, have exploited the archaeological and historical record, especially those of the Achaemenid and Sasanian empires, to advocate their nationalist agendas. This paper concludes with an assessment of the recent manifestations of Iranian nationalism in the post-revolutionary era, and its utilization of Iran's history and recent sociopolitical transformations.*

Nationalism—as an ideology that vests political rights and accomplishments in a nation as a whole—in its different social, functional, temporal, and spatial manifestations has long been a fascinating topic for sociocultural anthropologists. Archaeologists, on the other hand, have recently begun to devise new approaches to nationalism by exploring the relation between their profession and nationalism and the effects nationalist sentiments can leave on the development and practice of archaeology in different parts of the globe.¹

The Near East, owing to its rich archaeological and historical past and its contemporary sociocultural diversity, has been particularly interesting for exploring connections between nationalism, archaeology, and political manipulations of archaeological record to advocate nationalist agendas.² This paper explores the very same questions in the case of a largely ignored country, Iran. The Revolution of 1979 and the ensuing Iran-Iraq War of 1980–1988 brought all archaeological fieldwork in Iran

by foreign expeditions to a halt. Of the European, Japanese, and North American archaeologists who were active in Iran, the younger generation has sought fieldwork opportunities elsewhere, and the senior generation has tried to publish the results of their research before retirement or death. Although this hiatus during the Iranian revolution fostered many symposia and numerous publications, which in all possibility would not have materialized if fieldwork had continued in Iran, one should not ignore the fact that very few new archaeologists have been trained in Iranian archaeology, and courses on the archaeology of Iran have been dropped from many academic curricula. Consequently, Iran, once a major center for field research, has slipped into an archaeological isolation.

This situation may be changing. Recent developments in relations between Iran and many Western countries, including the United States, promise an improvement in cultural exchange, and archaeological research in Iran by foreign expeditions may soon resume. Therefore, time seems ripe for a review of the development of archaeology, nationalism, and political developments in Iran during the past 100 years. Among many lessons to be learned from this survey, one may begin to see why Iran underwent such drastic sociopolitical changes and chose to go through political and archaeological isolation for so long.

THE BASES OF NATIONALISM IN IRAN

Most Iranians evince nationalist sentiments. But nationalism expressed by members of different segments of Iranian society demonstrates qualitative and quantitative differences. These differences emanate from Iranians' degree of historical consciousness, as well as their exposure to national and international intellectual currents. A semideveloped historical

*I would like to thank Kathryn Babayan, Joyce Marcus, Henry Wright, and anonymous reviewers for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank Adam T. Smith for providing me with a copy of his unpublished paper. As always, errors of facts and interpretations,

remain solely my responsibility.

¹ Cf. Trigger 1984; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Atkinson et al. 1996; Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996.

² Cf. Silberman 1989; Whitelam 1996; Meskell 1998.

consciousness characterizes Iranian society. For the general public this understanding is vague but incontrovertible and rarely exceeds mere description or speculation; it lacks either the vigor or the precision that characterizes academic debates.

The nationalism of educated Iranians, on the other hand, is sophisticated and coherently articulated. A review of the relevant publications would show that educated Iranians are capable of producing thousands of pages on the glory of ancient Iran and its contribution to world civilization. But, despite its academic aura, the nationalism advocated by educated Iranians may also fall into the same pitfalls that characterize the nationalism of the general public. This is largely because of the fact that nationalism, among many other concepts and disciplines—including archaeology—was imported to Iran in the 19th century by Western-educated Iranians or the introduction of Western concepts into the Iranian society. As we will see in this paper, this lack of indigenous development has prevented both nationalism and archaeology from a natural and gradual development in the context of Iranian culture—a problem that still troubles both.

The nationalism advocated by educated Iranians seems to fall into two broad categories: historical and political, both of which have proven to be potentially enduring. In the past few decades a minor undercurrent among Iranian intelligentsia has shown that Iranian historical nationalism is capable of approaching chauvinism, perhaps even racism. There is no dispute that in the past century, Iranian nationalism frequently has been used politically, but the political nationalism that intermittently resurfaced in this time period demonstrates a displaced emphasis on Iranian nationalism. For political nationalists, ancient Iran is of little or no concern, and they may only sporadically use Iran's past to advocate their goals, which primarily include freeing contemporary Iran from foreign influence and ensuring that Iran asserts itself in the world scene. Historical nationalism, on the other hand, is characterized by an elaborate, and sometimes crude, attempt to glorify the history and culture of ancient Iran. Unlike its political counterpart, historical nationalism is only tangentially associated with poli-

tics. Nonetheless, a glance at the recent history of Iran shows that historical nationalism is swift to advocate its agenda whenever politics provides a fertile environment.

No culture can survive or evolve in isolation, thus coercive or cordial interaction with foreign cultures through the ages has dramatically transformed Iranian culture. Arguing that Iranian culture today is the same as at the time of the Achaemenids or Sasanians is obviously incorrect, but several persistent cultural traits suggest that some degree of cultural continuity exists between contemporary and pre-Islamic Iran. The foundations of Iranian culture laid in pre-Islamic times proved to be resistant to sociopolitical change. Even before their resurrection in the Pahlavi period, pre-Islamic traditions were influential in Iran. Especially in the case of the institution of kingship, it has been argued that rulers of the Qajar dynasty modeled their kingship after the Sasanian monarchy, which was transmitted to the Islamic period through general histories, instructions for kingship, and several versions of the *Book of Kings*, especially the *Shah Nameh* of Ferdowsi.³

Perhaps the most vital factor in this cultural continuity and the hallmark of Iranian national identity is the Persian language. Having been used in Iran at least since the time of Achaemenids in the sixth century B.C.E., the Persian language has assumed a distinctive Iranian character⁴ and become intertwined with Iranian national identity and unity.⁵ Not surprisingly, in recent times the Persian language has been one of the most important contexts in which Iranian nationalism has flourished.

This paper is not an attempt to study the development of nationalism in Iran; others have studied this topic, whether in its support⁶ or denial.⁷ My goal here is to explore the elusive connection between nationalism, politics, the development of Iranian archaeology, and the uses and abuses of archaeology and ancient history in promoting nationalism in Iran in the past century and half. Following some pioneering works,⁸ after the Revolution of 1979, the history of archaeology in Iran has attracted considerable attention, both among foreign⁹ and Iranian scholars.¹⁰ Most of these studies, however, are either descriptive or are chronicles of

³ Amanat 1997, 7.

⁴ Meskoob 1992.

⁵ Afshar 1927.

⁶ Cf. Cottam 1978.

⁷ Vaziri 1993.

⁸ Cf. de Morgan 1902, 1905; Mostafavi 1955; Ma'soumi 1976.

⁹ Cf. Young 1986; Perrot 1989, 1997; Chevalier 1989, 1992, 1997; Gran-Aymeric and Gran-Aymeric 1991; Carter 1992; Curtis 1993; Larsen 1996; Gluck and Siver 1996; Dyson 1997; de Morgan 1997.

¹⁰ Cf. Malek Shahmirzadi 1986, 1987, 1990; Azkaii 1988; M. Mousavi 1990, 1994; A. Mousavi 1992, 1996; Chegini 1994; Abdi

discoveries or administrative changes. A thorough study of the conceptual and methodological developments of Iranian archaeology is yet to be done.

NATIONALISM AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN IRAN DURING THE REIGN OF NASER AD-DIN SHAH QAJAR

The second half of the Qajar dynasty (1787–1925) witnessed major changes in Iran, including the introduction of nationalism and archaeology. As Western countries were moving toward the Industrial revolution as well as political and economic supremacy in the 19th century, Iran was suffering from a severe social and economic depression under the Qajars. Several military confrontations with the Russian Empire in the early 19th century led to the loss of extensive territories in Transcaucasia and Central Asia. From the mid 19th century, both the Russians and the British exerted increasing political and economic pressure on Iran. By the late 19th century, despite maintaining its independence, Iran was nominally transformed into a buffer zone between the British and Russian empires in Asia. The Anglo-Russian mutual understanding opened Iran to British and Russian agents, some with archaeological interests. In the early 1840s, the Russian Baron Th.A. de Bode and the British Austin H. Layard traveled in Lurestan and Khuzestan and recorded some archaeological sites. From 1836 to 1841, Henry C. Rawlinson copied the trilingual inscription at Bisotun and made a major breakthrough in deciphering the cuneiform script.¹¹ Later, based on the recently translated cuneiform inscriptions and classical texts, George Rawlinson published the first modern history of ancient Iran from the Median to the Sasanian periods, in a series which eventually culminated in the publication of *The Seven Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World*.¹²

The long reign of Naser ad-Din Shah (1846–1896) witnessed both the rise of modern nationalism and the beginning of archaeological research in Iran. In this period, Iranian interest in archaeological material rarely advanced beyond mere treasure hunting and antiquarianism, and the lack of any serious appreciation for the cultural value of archaeological sites or artifacts led to much destruction. The new hobby was particularly appealing to

the Qajar elite. Mohammad-Hassan Khan-e 'Etemad al-Saltaneh, a trustee of Naser ad-Din Shah, was one of the more enthusiastic treasure hunters and collectors of the late Qajar period. In February of 1885 he wrote, "I came home after lunch and spent some time studying ancient coins. I have picked up [this hobby] recently, I am collecting ancient coins."¹³ On the methods applied for finding artifacts, he wrote, "The King has gone to Doshan-Tappeh. I stayed at home. In the evening, I visited Shazadeh 'Abd al-Azim to see *tala-shuyi* [lit., gold-washing]."¹⁴

On the so-called *tala-shuyi* method of excavation A.H. Schindler, the German-born British engineer, made the following observations while laying the Tehran-Mashhad telegraph line in 1875:¹⁵

A distance south of Damghan there is a mound known as Tappeh Hesar. A few months ago some antiques were discovered there. Since then [people] have been working there and finding marvelous objects. The first time I was in Damghan, I visited the mound and realized that they are not working properly. I told them what to do, and to bring water to the head of the mound to finish the job faster and more efficiently. The second time I was there they were much better. . . . They have dug a stream which ran through the mound and washed antiques unbroken.

Some excavations were in fact sponsored by Naser ad-Din Shah: "[S]ome ruins can be seen in parts of Lar. His Majesty ordered some spots to be dug. Some nice tiles came out."¹⁶ Meanwhile, in his narrative of the pilgrimage to Karbala and Najaf, Naser ad-Din Shah wrote, "They did some *tala-shuyi* today. I didn't go. It was windy and dusty. I sent the Butler, Mirza Ali Khan-e Mohaqqeq; [he came back and said that] considerable gold, silver, and objects were discovered."¹⁷

Already, these destructive activities had raised considerable emotion among the educated elite of the Qajar period. In 1877, after a visit to a number of European countries, Hajj Sayyah wrote, "I have not seen a country as miserable as Iran or a nation as unfortunate as Iranians. Other countries not only preserve every menial remain left behind by ancient commoners of their own country with much effort, but spend a great deal to take antiquities of other lands to their country, investigate its date and its makers with painstaking accuracy and, indeed, are proud of this."¹⁸

1994a, 1996; Negahban 1997; Karimlou 1999; Niknami 2000.

¹¹ Larsen 1996.

¹² Rawlinson 1885. The fifth monarchy was the Achaemenids, the sixth the Parthians, and the seventh the Sasanians.

¹³ 'Etemad al-Saltaneh 1978, 407.

¹⁴ 'Etemad al-Saltaneh 1978, 732.

¹⁵ Schindler 1968, 206.

¹⁶ 'Etemad al-Saltaneh 1978, 92.

¹⁷ Abbasi and Badi' 1993, 36.

¹⁸ Sayyah 1978, 41.

Apparently, Naser ad-Din Shah's interest in antiquities gradually grew beyond excavation and he had a museum built in one of his palaces in Tehran. Schindler wrote in 1875 that "the *Shahanshah* [king of kings] has permitted some foreigners to dig at [some] mounds. It is a pity that these ancient artifacts are being taken away from this land. It would be a good idea to put everything like bricks, seals, etc. in the Shahanshahi museum."¹⁹

The expansion of the royal collection of antiquities in the Shahanshahi museum encouraged Morteza Qoli Khan-e Momtaz al-Molk, the nationalist minister of Culture, Islamic Endowments, and Crafts after the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 to establish the National Museum of Iran in Tehran in 1910, a "historical step . . . of significant service to the Iranians in the future."²⁰

Perhaps the most important development in Iranian archaeology in the late Qajar period was the beginning of the French excavations at Susa. After the initial excavations by William K. Loftus in 1850 to 1852,²¹ the British, grossly underestimating the archaeological significance of Susa, dispatched Loftus to Mesopotamia to resume excavations at Warka and Kuyunjik. The French took advantage of the British withdrawal, and in 1882 Marcel and Jean Dieulafoy applied to the Iranian government to excavate at Susa. Under the influence of his French physician, Dr. Tholozan, Naser ad-Din Shah finally concurred:

Mon mari était demeuré dans les termes les plus affectueux avec le docteur Tholozan, médecin et ami de Nasr ed-Din chah. Pendant la durée de notre premier voyage nous avons dû à ses recommandations de pénétrer dans les mosquées les mieux closes; souvent même notre sécurité avait dépendu de ses soins. Ce fut à lui que nous eûmes recours.

Pendant que notre ministre engageait avec le gouvernement persan de nouvelles négociations, le docteur Tholozan s'adressait directement au chah. Il intéressa la roi au succès de travaux qui devaient mettre en lumière l'histoire glorieuse de ses antiques prédécesseurs; il lui parla l'estime que prendraient ses contemporains pour le caractère d'un prince toujours heureux de favoriser les efforts du monde savant. Si, en sa qualité d'autocrate, Nasr ed-Din chah ne tolère pas volontiers la contradiction et ne se laisse pas détourner aisément d'une idée préconçue, comme homme il est accessible à des considérations d'un ordre élevé, et l'on ne fait pas un, vain appel à ses sentiments généreux. Nous, en eûmes bientôt la preuve.

Le gouvernement persan présenta quelques observations relatives aux tribus pillardes de l'Arabistan

[Khuzestan], formula des craintes au sujet de fanatisme local, fit des réserves concernant le tombeau de Daniel, exigea le partage des objets découverts et l'attribution au chah des métaux précieux, et nous accorda l'autorisation de fouiller les tumulus élamites.²²

The Dieulafoys dug at Susa from 1884 to 1886. The artifacts they discovered and sent back to the Louvre Museum in Paris raised considerable excitement.²³ This reaction encouraged the French government to plan future work at Susa on a larger scale. But, after the 1886 season, the Iranian government, because of the skirmishes that the French excavations had caused in the Susa area, refused to renew their permit. In fact, Naser ad-Din Shah was annoyed by Marcel Dieulafoy, who, ignoring the terms of the concession, took all the finds to France. The Iranian government officially protested to the French government. In response, in 1889 the French government invited Naser ad-Din Shah to visit the new Persian exhibition at the Louvre. Naser ad-Din Shah, joyful in finding a chance to travel to Europe, accepted the invitation, viewed the exhibit, and withdrew the protest.²⁴ Subsequently, in 1895, one year before his assassination, under the influence of Dr. Tholozan, Naser ad-Din Shah granted the French the right to conduct archaeological excavations in the whole country. Two years later, the French government founded the *Délégation scientifique Française en perse*, with Jacques de Morgan as its director. De Morgan soon established himself at Susa, built a fort on top of the Acropole mound, and embarked on excavating the site, using methods that by today's standards were inaccurate, to say the least.²⁵ In 1900, motivated by the large number of eye-catching discoveries at Susa, the French obtained the monopoly on archaeological excavations in Iran from Mozaffar ad-Din Shah (1896–1905), the son and successor of Naser ad-Din Shah.²⁶

Both concessions were completely in favor of the French. According to them, all the antiquities discovered in excavations were to be sent to France, and the Iranian government would only be reimbursed for objects made of gold and silver. This provoked a number of nationalists to protest against the looting of the cultural heritage of Iran. Hajj Zein-al-'Abedin-e Maragheh-i, under the pseudonym of Ebrahim Beig, protested:²⁷ "I heard the agonizing news that recently the right to excavate at Shushtar and Hamadan and elsewhere has been

¹⁹ Schindler 1968, 206–7.

²⁰ Mostafavi 1955, 348.

²¹ Loftus 1857; Curtis 1993.

²² Dieulafoy 1990, 22–3.

²³ Gran-Aymaric and Gran-Aymaric 1991, 139–81; Chevalier

1997.

²⁴ Abdi 1994a, 91.

²⁵ A. Mousavi 1992, 1996.

²⁶ Abdi 1994a, 91–5.

²⁷ Maragheh-i 1904, 133.

granted through the French ambassador to a French company. The Iranian nation has not the faintest clue about these matters, but those who comprehend its abusive consequences are in great calamity that all those ancestral treasures our motherland has preserved for us Iranians in her bosom for ages . . . is lost to a *farangi*.²⁸

THE LATE QAJAR PERIOD AND THE RISE OF HISTORICAL NATIONALISM IN IRAN

Devoid of any economic initiative, Naser ad-Din Shah distributed Iranian resources to eager foreigners to obtain easy revenues for his extravagant court and luxurious European trips.²⁹ The lucrative tobacco concession granted to the British Major Gerald Talbot in 1890 was the last straw for middle-class Iranians, already frustrated with the incompetence of the Qajar kings. The tobacco affair triggered a chain reaction, leading in less than a year to the withdrawal of the concession, in six years to the assassination of Naser ad-Din Shah, and in 16 years to the Constitutional Revolution of 1906.

The original instigators of the Revolution of 1906 were three groups from Iranian society: the clergy, the merchants, and the intellectuals, only the latter with strong nationalist feelings.³⁰ The clergy, without whom the revolution would not have succeeded, soon realized to their dismay that the new system would implicitly favor secularism. The merchant participants, on the other hand, were satisfied when the revolution fulfilled their material demands. Lastly, the intellectuals, who had no previous experience in the deceitful world of politics, became disillusioned and drifted away when the British and the Russians resumed their pressure on Iran. The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 is considered by many³¹ to be a turning point in nationalism in Iran. According to the terms of this agreement, Iran would be divided into British and Russian spheres of influence, with a neutral buffer zone in the middle. The Iranian government refused to recognize this agreement but had no power to prevent it from happening. Iranians were greatly offended and objected strenuously. Nationalist poets protested against the agreement with patriotic expressions recalling glories

of Iran's history and mythology. Malek al-Shu'ara-ye Bahar, a noted poet of the late Qajar period, for example, wrote:³²

O . . . Iranians, Iran is in nuisance
The land of Darius is exposed to Nicholas

The land of kings is at the mercy of monsters
Where is Islamic zeal? where is patriotism?

My brave brothers, why such reticence?
Iran is yours, Iran is yours.

Later that year, when the Russians occupied the Iranian Azerbaijan, Malek al-Shu'ara wrote:³³

O . . . the morning breeze who rise from the east
Travel to Azerbaijan at dawn
...
Mourn and cry for that land of darkness
Kiss for me that rose-colored soil
Then travel to Azargoshasb
Bewail in that fire temple
In that ruined ivan
If you see the spirit of Keyqobad and the soul of Kavous
Tell them, O . . . the fortunate kings
O . . . prides of the crown and worthies of the throne
...

Shahanshahs of Ecbatana and Istakhr
All found glory and pride in this land
...

This was the land of armies at the time of Cyrus
The resting place of warriors and the camp of the king
For the games of the King and his prime
I see it now, captive in the claws of insurgents.

In the meantime, the new Shah, Mohammad-'Ali, who, as heir to Mozaffar ad-Din Shah, had endorsed the Constitution in 1906, rejected the new regime and, with the help of the Russian Cossacks, defeated the Constitutionalists in Tehran. Mohammad-'Ali Shah was soon subdued by the Constitutionalists and chose to go into exile to Russia. British and Russian interference in Iran, however, remained intact. The British and Russian antagonism toward Iran reached a climax when they ejected the American Morgan Shuster, who was employed by the Iranian government to reorganize the administration.³⁴ The Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 and the following upheavals directed Iranian nationalism into new, more subtle directions. It was in this era that the seeds of the xenophobic aspect of Ira-

²⁸ *Farangi*—derived from Frank—is a somewhat derogatory term in Iran in the past to refer to Europeans.

²⁹ Amanat 1997.

³⁰ Despite their nationalist sentiments, it is interesting to see that a group of the early nationalists regarded the long history of Iran as a source of disgrace rather than pride. E.g., on the first anniversary of the revolution, the influential news-

paper *Habl al-Matin* (July 23, 1907, 1) commented: "This is the day that the nation of Iran was liberated from the burden of 6,000 years of despotism."

³¹ E.g., Cottam 1978, 166.

³² Quoted in Aryanpour 1971, 132.

³³ Quoted in Aryanpour 1971, 132–3.

³⁴ Shuster 1912.

nian nationalism were laid, later to resurface in the Mosaddeq era and the Revolution of 1979.

The First World War and British and Russian involvement with the Central Powers gave Iran a chance to rejuvenate. But as soon as the war was over, the British, free of their old rival, resumed their imperialist policy in Iran. The Anglo-Persian treaty of 1919 was interpreted by many nationalist circles as transforming Iran into a British semi-protectorate. In the last years of the Qajar dynasty, Iran was in complete disarray, with overwhelming internal problems and crass British interference in governmental affairs. Not surprisingly, the 1921 coup d'état by Seyyed Zia ad-Din Tabataba'i and Reza Khan was considered to be a deliverance for many Iranians. In its first official act, the new government proclaimed the elimination of foreign influence and promotion of patriotism among its major objectives.³⁵

One year after the coup, when social and economic reforms by the new regime were commencing, a group of nationalist elite founded the Society for National Heritage (*Anjoman-e Āsār-e Melli*) in Tehran. According to its declaration, this society was established "to enhance public interest in ancient knowledge and crafts; and to preserve antiquities and handicrafts and their ancient techniques."³⁶ Also, the Society laid out the following as its primary goals: (1) building a museum and library in Tehran; (2) ensuring the proper recording and registration of all remains that their protection as national heritage is necessary; (3) making proper recording and registration of antiquities which are in possession of the government and national organizations.

Among the founding members of the Society for National Heritage were three prominent intelligentsia with political backgrounds and strong nationalist sentiments. First, Hasan Pirnia (Moshir al-Dowleh) was a dedicated patriot and one of the most influential politicians of the late Qajar period. He received his doctorate in law from Moscow University in 1898 and served as the first prime minister after the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, to reoccupy the position for four more times until the fall of the Qajar dynasty in 1925. After his mandatory retirement by Reza Khan in 1925, Pirnia devoted his time to cultural activities. He served as a member of the executive committee of the Society for National Heritage and spent most of his time

writing about ancient Iran. In 1927 Pirnia published *Ancient Iran*, followed by *Myths of Ancient Iran* in 1928, and, in 1933, by his opus magnum, the comprehensive *History of Ancient Iran* from prehistoric times to the fall of the Parthian empire.³⁷ The last volume of the *History*, on the Sasanian empire, was posthumously completed and published by Sa'id Naficy.

Pirnia's *History* is a diligent piece of scholarship in which he consulted many sources in European languages as well as ancient and modern Near Eastern texts. Furthermore, in order to provide an up-to-date text, he corresponded with many scholars investigating ancient Iran, especially Ernst Herzfeld, with whom Pirnia was in close contact throughout the writing of the *History*. Interestingly, despite Pirnia's strong patriotic feelings, the *History* is exonerated from biased interpretations that characterize nationalist writings. This has made the *History* one of the most valued and widely read works of historiography in modern Iran.

In 1928 Pirnia was elected a member of the Commission of Education. This Commission was established to reorganize the educational system in Iran and to provide, by means of writing and translation, books for students on different levels. The Commission solicited Pirnia for a contribution on the culture and history of ancient Iran. The result was a revised and combined edition of his *Ancient Iran* and *Myths of Ancient Iran*, published as *The Ancient Iran* in 1929. *The Ancient Iran* served as the textbook at the high school level for the next two decades.³⁸

Another influential founding member was Mohammad-Ali Foroughi (Zoka al-Molk), a prominent politician in the early Pahlavi period, who served as prime minister under both Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. As early as 1901, Foroughi wrote a textbook, *History of Iran*, for the newly founded School of Political Science. This book demonstrates an interesting juxtaposition of historical information on pre-Islamic dynasties of the Achaemenids, Seleucids, Parthians, and Sasanians derived from foreign literature, as well as traditional Iranian history on legendary kingdoms of Pishdadians and Kiyanians. In 1917 Foroughi published a revised version of *History of Iran* that covered Iranian history to the time of Mohammad-Ali Shah. The idea of writing a comprehensive history of ancient Iran was conceived at a meeting between Pirnia and Foroughi in 1927. Pirnia was assigned to write on pre-Islamic Iran (see above), Seyyed Hasan Taqiza-

³⁵ Wilber 1975, 49.

³⁶ Society for National Heritage 1922, 1.

³⁷ Pirnia 1933.

³⁸ Bastani-Parizi 1968, 543.



Fig. 1. Persepolis, 24 November 1923. The official delegation led by Prince Firuz Mirza in robe in the front greeting Ernst Herzfeld. (After Hennessey 1992, fig.2)

deh to write the history of Iran from Arab to Mongol invasions, and 'Abbas Eqbal from the Mongol invasion to the Constitutional Revolution. Foroughi played an important role in the abolition of the French monopoly on Iranian archaeology and ratification of the Antiquities Law in 1930 (see below). In December 1934, Foroughi resigned as the prime minister to spend more time in the Iranian Academy in the campaign to purify Persian from foreign words (see below).

A third notable founding member of the Society for National Heritage was Nosrat ad-Dowleh Firuz Mirza (fig. 1).³⁹ A Qajar prince, Firuz (as he was commonly called) was of lower standing than Pirnia in academic knowledge or Foroughi in political status, but shared an equal patriotic affection. Firuz played a crucial role in the development of archaeology in Iran when, in 1923, as the governor of Fars, fulfilled a long-time dream and encouraged Ernst Herzfeld to conduct a preliminary study of the ruins of Persepolis and explore the possibility of a long-term project to excavate the Persepolis platform (see below).

In its first stage, the Society for National Heritage organized several lectures on aspects of culture and history of Iran in pre-Islamic and Islamic times and published eight booklets on related topics. In 1934, following the celebrations of the millennial anniversary of Ferdowsi and the unveiling of his mausoleum at Tus, the Society was suspended by Reza Shah, only to resume work in 1943.

NATIONALISM AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNDER REZA SHAH PAHLAVI

Reza Khan (later Reza Shah) can best be described as a fierce nationalist. Of humble background, Reza Khan made his way up the military ranks to a general in the Cossack division of the Iranian army. Whether Reza Khan had any pre-planned designs for rebuilding Iran when he led the 1921 coup d'état with Seyyed Zia ad-Din Tabatabayi is an open question. Later, however, realizing his dominant position in a power vacuum, he took advantage of his military support and his strong personality to ascend to power as the new Shah of Iran in 1925. In 20 years, Reza Shah restored Irani-

³⁹ Aqeli 1994.

an autonomy, removed foreign influence, and embarked on extensive industrial and military modernization and socioeconomic reforms.⁴⁰

Reza Khan's strong patriotic feelings date to before the coup, and even back then he did not hesitate to openly express them. Patriotic expressions with frequent references to Iran's past were an integral part of Reza Khan's speech. On December 7, 1921, he told a group of gendarme officers, "Gentlemen! Our dear homeland is in urgent need of its brave sons. It is up to you to show lofty resolve in the service of the country, and to make efforts to secure the independence of your country. Be alert and diligent; the dust of Ardashir is watching over you."⁴¹

In a proclamation on the first anniversary of the coup, Reza Khan addressed the critics: "If you reminisce a bit, you will realize that the land of Darius was on the verge of destruction because of actions of his evil and illegitimate children. . . . I was unable to allow a group of intrigues to succeed in their efforts to strangle this three-thousand-year-old country merely so that they might make a profit. That is why I brought about the coup d'état."⁴²

Reza Khan had two overriding and inseparable goals that he pursued relentlessly: to restore Iran to some of its former greatness and to establish himself as the absolute power on top of the reconstructed nation.⁴³ In his first speech after he was appointed prime minister in 1923, Reza Khan stated:

There are two sorts of misfortune either one of which, if not remedied, is able to destroy the national identity of any deteriorating race or people. These are domestic disorder and insecurity and chaos of thought, ideas and morals.

An examination of the recent events in Iran will show that these two factors, from which emanate all our troubles, existed throughout the country. The first source of adversity has, thanks to Providence, been eliminated. Now is the time to correct the second and now is the occasion to lay a sound foundation for Iranian nationality.

We are fully alert to the fact that the morale of the public has, in general, been lowered to a threatening extent. There are many who, heedless of the princi-

ple of self-reliance, have taken on the habit of adopting foreign support as a means for making their living and for promoting their own designs. It is this activity alone which will bring disgrace to the Iranian nation whose chivalrous exploits, fame and eminence have for ages been the ornaments of Iranian history. . . . It is incumbent upon every Iranian to maintain the glory of Iranian history by learning to rely upon himself and upon the powerful force of the nation.⁴⁴

Reza Shah's career directly affected the development of archaeology in Iran. The collapse of the centralized government at the end of the Qajar period prompted several locally powerful leaders to declare nominal autonomy. One critical region was Khuzestan in southwestern Iran. This province has had a mixed population of Arabs and Iranians of various ethnic groups, especially Lurs. Khaz'al, the Sheikh of Mohammareh (now Khorramshahr), was one of the local leaders who opposed the rising star of Reza Khan. After attempts to ally himself with the dying Qajar dynasty and the opposition group to Reza Shah in the parliament, Sheikh Khaz'al sought the support of the British, who were already excited about the prospects of the recent discovery of oil in Khuzestan. In an act of open rebellion against Tehran, Sheikh Khaz'al declared himself the protector of Islamic *shari'a* against Iranian secularism and the defender of the Arab people of Khuzestan, who had no ethnic or linguistic ties with the Iranians. Sheikh Khaz'al sought to persuade the nomadic chiefdoms of the Zagros to ally with him, thus transforming the Zagros Mountains into an impregnable barrier between Reza Khan and Khuzestan. Sheikh Khaz'al's attempts met with no success, and in 1924 Reza Khan personally led a military campaign into Khuzestan. Sheikh Khaz'al, abandoned by the British, was defeated in a matter of hours.⁴⁵ While in Khuzestan, Reza Khan paid a visit to Susa and, to his great despair, learned about crude archaeological activities at the site by the French and the Concessions of 1895 and 1900.⁴⁶ Shortly afterwards, encouraged by nationalist figures, especially General Faraj-Allah Aq-evli and

⁴⁰ Banani 1961; Khalili-Khou 1994.

⁴¹ Quoted in Makki 1944, 354.

⁴² Quoted in Wilber 1975, 63–4.

⁴³ Cottam 1978, 146.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Wilber 1975, 73.

⁴⁵ Mostowfi 1945–1947, 4:478.

⁴⁶ Ma'soumi 1976, 45. Reza Shah paid more visits to Susa in 1928 and 1937. Relations between Iran and France were sour during Reza Shah's 1937 visit as a result of publications in France of articles offensive to him in February of that year, so he did not want a French archaeologist to give him a tour of the excavations. An Iranian working with the French mission was

entrusted with the job: "The guide took them [Reza Shah and his retinue] to a large open pit and showed an area that he said was the remains of one of the audience halls of the Achaemenid rulers, and added that a piece of cement from the floor was in the Museum in Tehran. The Shah asked if nothing else had been found and was told that columns and statuettes had been uncovered. Pressed further the guide added that these pieces were all in the Louvre Museum. The ruler remarked: 'Those thieves took all those objects to the Louvre and left the cement for Iran.' He was so outraged and furious that he refused to eat lunch with his suite, and went off to eat by himself in the hut of the gendarme guards" (Wilber 1975, 179).

Mohammad Ali Foroughi, the Majles abolished both Concessions on 17 October 1927 and ratified the Antiquities Law three years later.⁴⁷

According to the new regulations, activities of the French mission were restricted to Susa and its environs with an Iranian representative supervising their excavations. To fulfill the long-delayed goal of the Society of National Heritage (see above), the Iranian government was required to build an archaeological museum and library in Tehran. To compensate the French for the abolition of concessions, the Iranian government accepted a French citizen as the director of the newly founded archaeological body. André Godard (1881–1965) began his job as the first director of the “Antiquities Service of Iran” in 1929.⁴⁸ Godard was replaced by Ali Farahmandi as the director of this organization in 1934.⁴⁹ The so-called Godard era in Iranian archaeology was marked by two accomplishments: inauguration of the first Iranian journal of archaeology (*Athar-e-Īrān*) and the design and construction of a museum modeled after the great Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon. In 1936, antique collections were transported from the old National Museum at Mas’oudieh to the new building, and in 1937, after the establishment of the headquarters of the Antiquities Service of Iran, the *Iran Bastan Museum* was officially founded by Reza Shah.

The elimination of the French monopoly opened up Iran to archaeological expeditions from other countries. Prior to 1930, only a handful of archaeologists managed to break through the French monopoly to conduct fieldwork in Iran. Raphael Pumpelly dug at Anau in 1903, Frank Earp briefly dug at Geoy Tappeh in 1903, Aurel Stein conducted some surveys and excavations in southeastern Iran in 1915 and 1916, and Ernst Herzfeld made a general reconnaissance survey in 1905, some excavations at Pasargadae in 1928, and conducted a survey in western Iran in 1925–1926 and 1928.⁵⁰ After the abolition of the French monopoly, other coun-

tries, especially the United States, launched archaeological investigations in Iran. The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania sponsored three expeditions: excavations at Turang Tappeh from 1931 to 1932 under Frederick R. Wulsin, excavations at Tappeh Hesar from 1931 to 1932 and at Ray from 1934 to 1936, both under Erich. F. Schmidt. Under the auspices of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Schmidt also dug at Istakhr from 1934 to 1939, carried out the first aerial reconnaissance in western Iran from 1935 to 1937, and led one of the first expeditions to Luristan in 1934–1935 and 1937–1938. The Oriental Institute also sponsored excavations at Tall-e Bakun in 1932 and 1937 under Alexander Langsdorff and Donald E. McCown. The Metropolitan Museum of Art sponsored excavations at Qasr-e Abu Nasr from 1932 to 1935 under Walter Hauser and J. M. Upton. Furthermore, Aurel Stein conducted extensive surveys and some test excavations in southern and western Iran from 1932 to 1936, and the Sino-Swedish expedition excavated at Shah Tappeh in 1933 under T. J. Arne. The French also expanded their activities by digging at Tappeh Giyan from 1931 to 1932 under Georges Contenau and Roman Ghirshman, Tappeh Sialk from 1933 to 1934 and 1937, and Bishapur from 1935 to 1941, both under Ghirshman. The Oriental Institute excavations at Persepolis from 1931 to 1939, however, proved to be of particular significance in promoting nationalist sentiments in Iran.

Persepolis has always been a great attraction for foreign travelers, historians, and archaeologists,⁵¹ not to mention the many Iranians who visited the site after its destruction at the end of the Achaemenid period.⁵² As early as 1685, Engelbert Kaempfer pleaded for the protection and preservation of the monuments at Persepolis, which were being mutilated or removed by vandals.⁵³ As scholarly interest in Persepolis grew during the 18th and 19th centuries, the prospect of excavations at the site became

⁴⁷ Malek Shalunirzadi 1986, 140.

⁴⁸ Ma’soumi 1976, 7–9.

⁴⁹ Godard continued to work in the Archaeological Service for another 20 years or so. But, as his loyalties lay elsewhere, he failed to earn the respect of the Iranians (Malek Shahmirzadi 1990, 410, n. 31) and soon rumors began circulating about his involvement with antiquities dealers, most scandalous of which probably the “Ziviyeh Affair” (Keykhosravi 1984). The most serious blow to Godard’s reputation came when, in 1950, he published a dealer’s collection allegedly excavated from Ziviyeh (Godard 1950), but the oral tradition regarding Godard’s dismissal was that Louis Vanden Berghe found a pot he himself had excavated, marked, and given to Iran Bastan Mu-

seum for sale in an antiquities store. The authorities were alerted, and Godard was invited to a dinner, given a medal, thanked, and put on a plane to Paris.

⁵⁰ Herzfeld accompanied Reza Shah and his entourage in his visit to western and southwestern Iran from 25 October to 20 November 1928 and in the meantime conducted a general survey of the area; see Herzfeld 1929.

⁵¹ Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Drijvers 1991.

⁵² Shahbazi 1980. Persepolis was so fascinating to the Iranians that the first modern warship of the Iranian Navy, a 600-ton cruiser armed with four Krupp guns purchased from Germany in 1883, was named “Persepolis” (Curzon 1892, 2:394–6).

⁵³ Wiesehöfer 1991.

closer to reality. In 1772 Carsten Niebuhr cleared parts of the eastern stairway of the Apadana Hall to make sketches of the reliefs. Niebuhr's work was followed by several more specialized surveys, including Frantz Stolze's pioneering photographic recording of the site in 1872, and excavations at the Hall of One Hundred Columns by Mo'tamed al-Dowleh (Nasr ad-Din Shahs uncle) in 1876 and 1877.⁵⁴

In 1924, Nosrat ad-Dowleh Firuz Mirza, the governor of Fars and one of the founding members of the Society of National Heritage (see above) encouraged Ernst Herzfeld to conduct a preliminary survey of the ruins of Persepolis.⁵⁵ Herzfeld's report⁵⁶ prompted James H. Breasted, director of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, to apply to the Iranian Government for full-scale excavations at Persepolis. Under the auspices of the Oriental Institute and with partial funding by John D. Rockefeller, Herzfeld began excavations at Persepolis in 1931. Herzfeld continued the work until 1934, when, after some administrative problems,⁵⁷ Erich Schmidt replaced him as the director of excavations. Schmidt worked at the site until the outbreak of the Second World War. After 1939 the work was continued by the Archaeological Service of Iran under Hosein Ravanbod (four months in 1939), Isa Behnam (1939–1940), Mahmoud Rad (1940), Ali Sami (1941–1959), and Akbar Tajvidi (1968–1976).⁵⁸

Reza Shah was a strong supporter of excavations at Persepolis. He visited the site four times. During his first visit to Persepolis in 1922, prior to beginning of excavations there, he commented that "We should build a wall around Persepolis, so we could prevent more damage from happening to the site. We really have to do something about this site."⁵⁹

After his second visit to Persepolis in 1928, upon his return to Tehran, Reza Shah remarked to an assembly of officials:

History tells us about the splendor of ancient Iran. In the magnificent ruins of Persepolis one can witness this splendor without historians' bias, the ruins speak for themselves and tell you the glory of ancient Iranian monarchs.

When I saw the structures of Persepolis, I was moved by those colossal monuments, but seeing them [in such impaired state] deeply depressed me. I was nonetheless delighted [to learn] that such great kings have ruled Iran and left these magnificent remains. Patriotism and national pride should be embedded in every Iranian soul.⁶⁰

After the beginning of excavations at Persepolis, Reza Shah, who had already made acquaintance with Herzfeld, ardently advocated his works at the site and personally ensured that the project would run smoothly. In his third visit to the site in 1932, he told Herzfeld: "You are doing a work of civilization here, and I thank you."⁶¹ In his fourth and last visit to Persepolis in March 1937, Reza Shah praised the work done at the site and encouraged Erich Schmidt to work faster to clear the entire platform (fig. 2).⁶²

Although Reza Shah enjoyed spontaneous patriotic feelings, it can be argued that it was a single event that exhorted his strong will to revive the glories of ancient Iran. On 22 April 1925, the American art historian Arthur Upham Pope delivered a talk on "The Art of Iran in the Past and the Future."⁶³ The talk was in English, but it was concurrently translated into Persian for a large audience, including Reza Khan (then prime minister and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army), his cabinet, members of the Majles, members of the Society for National Heritage, and the American legation to Tehran. Pope presented a survey of Iranian art from the Achaemenid to Sasanian and Islamic times, and stressed the cultural, artistic, and spiritual contribution of Iran to world civilization. Pope emphasized that kings of Iran have always served as patrons of arts and crafts, and implied that a cultural and artistic revival in Iran required government endorsement and encouragement.

Pope's talk left a deep and lasting impression on Reza Khan. Obviously the principal point was in harmony with his own impression of Iran's past glories, but patronage of arts and culture was a new challenge that he found particularly appealing. Consequently, Reza Shah embarked on patronizing arts and crafts.

⁵⁴ Abdi 1996, 170.

⁵⁵ Ernst Herzfeld (1879–1948) was already an active figure in Iranian archaeology. He was among the first archaeologists to break into the French monopoly and conduct archaeological fieldwork in Iran. A scholar of colossal knowledge, Herzfeld was nonetheless accused of being involved in antiquities dealing and even of making forgeries of ancient artifacts. Between the 1900s and late 1920s he conducted extensive surveys and some excavations in Iran, and inaugurated the first series of *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* in 1929. Herzfeld excavated at Persepolis on behalf of the Oriental Institute from 1930 to 1934. A professor at the Berlin University of Jewish faith,

he chose not to return to Germany after his work in Iran, but went to London in 1935 and then to the U.S., where he joined the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton.

⁵⁶ Herzfeld 1928.

⁵⁷ Balcer 1991.

⁵⁸ M. Mousavi 1990, 12.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Ma'soumi 1976, 42.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Eskandari-Khoyini 1956, 72–3.

⁶¹ Quoted in Breasted 1933, 407.

⁶² Wilber 1975, 180.

⁶³ Pope 1971; also reprinted in Gluck and Siver 1996, 93–110.



Fig. 2. Persepolis, March 1937. Reza Shah, the crown prince, and their retinue in front of the Apadana reliefs.

Carpet-weaving was financially supported and other traditional crafts promoted. The government also sponsored restoration and conservation works on many historical monuments. The “Neo-Persian” art that had flourished in the Qajar period⁶⁴ received state endorsement when the government ordered that official buildings be built according to traditional Iranian architectural models, rather than European styles. The central branch of the National Bank of Iran, the police headquarters, and the central post office in Tehran were built imitating Achaemenid models, while the archaeological museum was inspired by the Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon.

Among the foreign scholars who worked in Iran in the Pahlavi era, Arthur Upham Pope (1881–1969) was perhaps the most influential in promoting Iranian nationalism.⁶⁵ Originally a professor of Greek philosophy at the University of California-Berkeley, Pope later trained himself in the arts of South and East Asia. Pope made his first trip to Iran in 1925—the same year he delivered his influential talk before Reza Shah. Pope was so fascinated with Iran that he immediately abandoned his other preoccupations and focused on Iranian arts and crafts. Pope established the American Institute for Persian (later Iranian) Art and

Archaeology in New York City in 1928. The Institute sponsored several archaeological expeditions to Iran, most importantly the Holmes expedition to Lurestan led by Erich F. Schmidt in 1934–1935 and 1937–1938, and a series of nine architectural surveys from 1929 to 1939 primarily focused on recording and photographing pre-Islamic and Islamic monuments (fig. 3). The American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology later evolved into the Asia Institute, with its adjunct School for Asiatic Studies. When Pope and his wife Phyllis Ackerman (1893–1977) settled in Iran in 1966, the Asia Institute was transferred to Shiraz and became affiliated with the Pahlavi University, with Queen Farah as its official sponsor.

Pope’s influence on Iranian archaeology in the Pahlavi era was remarkable. He edited the monumental *Survey of Persian Art* (*SoPA*), originally in six large folio volumes published in 1938–1939 with some 70 contributions from around the world. *SoPA* was republished in 1962 in 12 volumes with additional contributions. Pope and Ackerman served as advisors and dealers of Iranian art for many museums and private collections. They were also responsible for organizing the International Congresses of Iranian Art and Archaeology.⁶⁶ During their travels

⁶⁴ Cf. Lerner 1980, 1998.

⁶⁵ Gluck and Siver 1996.

⁶⁶ There were in total seven congresses: Philadelphia 1926, London 1931, Moscow-Leningrad 1935, New York-Philadelphia-Baltimore-Washington 1960, Tehran-Isfahan-Shiraz

1968, Oxford 1972, Munich 1976. There was also a semiofficial congress in New York in 1940. Despite considerable effort by Louis Vanden Berghe, the eighth Congress scheduled to be held in Gent in 1979 never convened because of the Iranian revolution.



Fig. 3. Iran-Afghan border, 5 November 1937. Members of the Eighth Architectural Survey in *pustin* (traditional Iranian trenchcoat) next to the new truck of the American Institute of Iranian Art and Archaeology. Arthur U. Pope second and Donald Wilber fourth from left. (After Gluck and Siver 1996, 265)

and studies in Iran, Pope and Ackerman developed a close friendship with the Pahlavi family, and it has been said that it was Pope who originally envisioned and suggested to Mohammad Reza Shah the idea of the celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the foundation of the Persian empire (see below).⁶⁷

Perhaps one of the most significant developments in Iranian archaeology during the reign of Reza Shah was the establishment in 1937 of the Department of Archaeology at Tehran University. The cornerstone of the University was laid by Reza Shah on 4 February 1934. Inspired by the recent discovery of gold and silver foundation plaques at Persepolis inscribed with cuneiform inscriptions of Darius I, Reza Shah placed a gold foundation plate in a marble box set in the cornerstone of the University.⁶⁸ The first student to graduate in 1941 from the Department of Archaeology was Fereydoun Tavalloli, who went on to pursue his career in archaeology in Fars,⁶⁹ including the first series of ex-

cavations at Malyan, but is better known for his literary works. Among the early instructors at the Department of Archaeology were two scholars who played important roles in promoting Iranian nationalism: Mohammad-Sadeq Kia and Ebrahim Pourdavoud. Kia, the first professor of Middle Persian at Tehran University, later, with Zabih Behrooz and Mohammad Moqaddam, formed the Society of the Land of Iran and published the *Iran Koudeh* series, which marked the climax of Iranian chauvinism (see below). Pourdavoud, more moderate than Kia in nationalist sentiments, was the first professor of ancient Iranian culture and languages, and the first to publish a Persian translation and commentary of *Avesta*.

HISTORICAL NATIONALISM IN IRAN DURING THE EARLY PAHLAVI PERIOD

Between 1923 and 1925, when Reza Khan's march to power met with opposition from the clerical wing

⁶⁷ Gluck and Siver 1996, 427–32.

⁶⁸ Wilber 1975, 163. The tradition of laying gold foundation plaques was repeated by Reza Shah in several newly built

factories.

⁶⁹ Emdad 1985.

in the Majles, he launched a three-pronged propaganda offensive in the press he controlled. This propaganda was aimed at the educated middle-class Iranians who, like Reza Khan, were mostly indifferent to religion. The first and second prongs in Reza Khan's offensive against the clergy portrayed them as backward political and social reactionaries opposing reforms that promised a better life to Iranians and as a group devoid of nationalism feelings and ever willing to sell Iran to foreigners, especially to the British. The third prong, on the other hand, was a comprehensive effort to reawaken the memory of Iran's pre-Islamic past, especially the Achaemenid and Sasanian empires, and glorify Zoroastrianism as the original religion of Iranians.⁷⁰ It was generally emphasized that the fall of the Sasanian empire and the Arab invasion of Iran in the seventh century was the biggest humiliation in Iranian history and that Arabs had compelled or tricked Iranians into giving up their ancient religion and converting to Islam. From the late 1920s, a new literary genre emerged in admiration of Zoroaster and his faith,⁷¹ equating it with the generative force of ancient Iran and attributing Iran's decline to the elimination of this force. For instance, Mirzade-ye 'Eshqi, the famous national poet, composed *Rastākhiz* (the Resurrection), an operetta in praise of Zoroaster and the ancient kings of Iran. Ebrahim Pourdavoud—later a professor at the Department of Archaeology of Tehran University (see above)—wrote a long poem, *Amshāspandān* (the Archangels), which told of an appearance of Zoroaster to the author in a vision, and 'Aref-e Qazvini composed verses in glorification of Zoroastrianism. Emphasis shifted from Islamic literature to those celebrating ancient Iranian traditions and teachings; Ferdowsi replaced Hafez and Sa'di as the most widely read Iranian poet. The national anthem and other patriotic songs venerated pre-Islamic times and called for greater glories for Iran. Religious holidays were limited and intense religious ceremonies banned, especially the pageants and self-flagellation of the Moharram mourning period. Instead, civic and national holidays such as the *Mehregān* ceremony were introduced to celebrate ancient Zoroastrian rituals. Also, in 1925 the solar calendar was promulgated over the more Islamic lunar calendar, with Nowruz as the beginning

of the new year and as the major Iranian ceremony. Furthermore, in 1925, shortly before his coronation, Reza Khan chose the name Pahlavi as his family name,⁷² thus emphasizing his cultural ties with pre-Islamic Iran. And at the end of 1934, the Iranian government officially declared that henceforward the Country must be called "Iran" and the name "Persia" should no longer be used. In a circular that followed in 1935, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained to all countries maintaining political relations with Iran that the Fars province, which the name Persia is derived from, is only a geographical section of the land of Iran. But, since the two major pre-Islamic Iranian dynasties of the Achaemenids and Sasanians, known to the Europeans through the classical sources, originated in Fars, the name of the province has become erroneously synonymous with the country, whereas the correct name, Iran—the land of the Aryans—has been used by Iranians to refer to their homeland from pre-Islamic times. This change was instituted at a time when the concept of an "Aryan race" was the subject of much debate and was being used in political propaganda to justify increasingly harsh persecutions in Europe, and there is little doubt that the Iranian government was unaware of these political currents. It has even been suggested that the impetus for the change of the name originated from the Iranian embassy in Berlin.⁷³

The grand emphasis on nationalism and ancient Iran that characterized the reign of Reza Shah left a deeper impact on Iranian historiography and the Persian language than the practice of archaeology. From the mid 19th century, Western-educated Iranians and adoption of European sciences and crafts introduced hundreds of foreign words from European languages, especially from French and English, into the Persian language. By the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, the language used by educated Iranians in the fields of science, politics, and the military was so replete with alien terminology that the general public would have found it somewhat incomprehensible. As early as 1868, a group of nationalist intellectuals with strong anti-Arab and anti-Islamic sentiments led by Mirza Malkum Khan proposed to rid Persian of Arabic words.⁷⁴ In 1897 a group of primarily young courtiers formed a society for furthering Persian grammar as well as

⁷⁰ Haas (1946, 170) claims that Reza Shah even entertained the idea of reviving Zoroastrianism as the official religion of Iran, but there is no tangible evidence to verify this.

⁷¹ See examples in Aryanpour 1971, vol. 2.

⁷² According to Wilber (1975, 229) during his visit to Perse-

polis in 1928, Reza Shah took Herzfeld aside and asked him to explain what Pahlavi really meant.

⁷³ Wilber 1975, 163.

⁷⁴ Algar 1969.

secondary and college education. Later, in 1924 an office was founded to coin equivalents for military terms, and another office in 1932 for scientific terms. In the meantime, the increasingly patriotic feelings in Iran and antagonism toward Arabs and Islam promoted by the Pahlavi government stimulated a number of extreme nationalists to introduce a new Persian prose characterized by extensive use of antiquated words or new constructs of antiquated words borrowed from Old and Middle Persian. This new style, which came to be called “the pure Persian” (*Fārsi-ye sar-e*), not only aimed to replace European words with Persian ones, but to eliminate the large Arabic vocabulary in Persian. This attempt soon led to complete disarray, prompting the government to create the Iranian Academy (*Farhangestān-e Irān*). The primary duty of the Academy was to find Persian equivalents for foreign words and to create a new, rigorous Persian vocabulary and prose capable of handling extensive cultural interaction in a changing world. The Academy is probably one of the more successful cultural institutions in Iran, creating in about 60 years the equivalents for thousands of European and Arabic words to retain the character of the Persian as a coherent language.⁷⁵

The Academy, however, proved to be of little success either in preventing the advocates of “the pure Persian” from promoting their prose, or the growth of chauvinism among a number of Iranian intelligentsia. Ahmad Kasravi was an early advocate of both.⁷⁶ While under the Islamic Republic a *persona non grata* and despised for his fierce attacks on Shiite Islam and clergy, some, nonetheless, consider Kasravi one the greatest historians in the recent history of Iran. In his career, Kasravi authored several meticulous historical studies, especially *Eighteen Years of History of Azerbaijan* (Tehran 1937) and *The History of Constitutionalism in Iran* (Tehran 1940). But, in a series of articles and books published after 1925, Kasravi chastised Islam and especially the Shiite ideology to the point that led to his assassination in 1945 by religious fanatics. Kasravi, a *seyyed* and a native of Azerbaijan, was, nonetheless, an outspoken nationalist and a firm promoter of Iranian culture and the Persian language. During 25

years Kasravi developed an idiosyncratic version of Persian with extensive usage of partially fictitious etymology adopted from Old and Middle Persian and Avestan, among other old Iranian languages. The ambitious book *Varjāvand Bonyād* (The Sacred Foundation)⁷⁷—considered by many as Kasravi’s opus magnum—is probably the most definitive manifesto of his Persian prose and ideas.

Kasravi’s ideas and prose proved to be particularly appealing to a group of fanatic nationalists who actively despised Arabs and Islam and attributed Iran’s decline to Islam and the Arab invasion of the seventh century. Between 1944 and 1968, a group of such nationalists under the name the Society of the Land of Iran (*Anjoman-e Irānvij*) published *Irān Koudeh*, a series of 18 books and pamphlets on culture, history, and languages of ancient Iran. The *Irānvij* Society seems to have had only three permanent members: Zabih Behrooz, Mohammad-Sadeq Kia, and Mohammad Moqaddam, the latter two professors at Tehran University, including the Department of Archaeology. The Iranian nationalism advocated by followers of the *Irānvij* Society is better described as chauvinistic, sometimes even racist. They strongly believed in Iranian superiority over other people in every aspect and greatly exaggerated Iran’s contribution to world civilization. This belief led them to gross misrepresentation of history. Behrooz, for example, published a number of ambiguous books, antagonistic to Arabs, the Arabic language, and to Islam, while promoting Iranian culture, history, and the Persian language. Two of these in particular, *Calendar and History in Iran* and *The Nowruz Calendar*,⁷⁸ stirred much controversy and criticism, as they both advocated implausible ideas about ancient Iran.

Mohammad Moqaddam, still respected in Iran for his superb translation of Albert T. Olmstead’s monumental *History of the Persian Empire*, brought antagonism toward Arabs and the Arabic language to a new level.⁷⁹ In a number of publications in the *Irān Koudeh* series, Moqaddam argued that a large number of Arabic words have Persian roots, and that Arabic is a distorted version of Persian.⁸⁰ Later in life he sought a Persian etymology for his Arabic name and changed it to Mahmad Mogdam, which,

⁷⁵ The Academy was suspended on the personal order of Reza Shah on 27 April 1938. Apparently, he was unhappy with the slow progress the Academy had made in purifying the Persian language from foreign words. It was, however, announced that the Academy would be reconstituted and resume its work when its bylaws were revised. This did not happen after Reza Shah’s abdication.

⁷⁶ For reviews of Kasravi’s career, see Dastgheyb 1978 and Choubineh 1993.

⁷⁷ Kasravi 1943.

⁷⁸ Behrooz 1952, 1968.

⁷⁹ Zakeri 1993, 418.

⁸⁰ Cf. Moghadam 1963.

according to him, had a Persian root and meant, respectively, "of grand position" and "of Magian soul."

Chauvinistic ideas of the sort advocated by the Iranvîj group did not catch on, and only a handful of Iranian writers followed them.⁸¹ Yet their basic ideas, especially a mild tendency toward the pure Persian, survived as an undercurrent in Iranian scholarship⁸² including the practice of archaeology.

NATIONALISM AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNDER MOHAMMAD REZA SHAH PAHLAVI

In 1941, nearly two years after the outbreak of the Second World War, despite Iran's proclaimed neutrality, Allied forces occupied the country. Reza Shah abdicated in favor of the crown prince, who assumed kingship in September 1941 as Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. The Allies' occupation of Iran put an end to archaeological field activities in Iran, except for excavations at Persepolis, which were continued by the Archaeological Service of Iran. After 1945 archaeological activities were resumed gradually over about 10 years. In 1949 Mahmoud Rad and Ali Hakemi of the Archaeological Service of Iran excavated at Hasanlu in Azerbaijan, where Aurel Stein's test excavations in 1936 had revealed Bronze and Iron Age remains. The French returned to Susa in 1946 under Roman Ghirshman, though his main focus from 1951 to 1962 was the excavation of the Elamite ziggurat at Chogha Zanbil. Donald McCown of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago excavated at Tall-e Qasir (Ghazir) in 1946 and 1947. T. Burton Brown of Manchester University dug for a fortnight in 1948 at Goey Tappeh near Urmia and established a preliminary chronology for western Azerbaijan from the fourth to first millennium B.C.E. Carlton S. Coon of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania began the first systematic investigation of paleolithic remains in Iran in 1949 by exploring a number of caves in the Zagros Mountains and the Caspian coast in Mazandaran. In 1950 Rad and Hakemi excavated the Iron Age graves at Khorvin near Qazvin on the foothills of Alborz Mountains. Their work was continued in 1954 by Louis Vanden Berghe of Gent University. Before that, from 1951 to 1953, Vanden Berghe conducted extensive surveys and some test excavations in central Fars and established a preliminary chronology for the region from the Neolithic to the

Iron Age. While Vanden Berghe continued his surveys in Larestan in southern Fars, a Japanese team under Namio Egami and Seichi Masuda conducted further excavation at Bakun in 1956, followed by excavations in other sites in the 1960s. Lastly, Robert H. Dyson of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania began excavations at Hasanlu in 1956. The Iranian Prehistory Project of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago under Robert J. Braidwood in 1959–1960 and its successor projects, especially the regional survey in Susiana by Robert McC. Adams in 1960–1961, and excavations at Tappeh Ali Kosh in the Deh Luran Plain by Frank Hole and Kent Flannery in 1961 and 1963, marked the beginning of the modern era in Iranian archaeology.

The Allies' occupation of Iran revived the dormant xenophobia of Iranian nationalism, under wraps during the Reza Shah era. The British and Americans evacuated the country shortly after the conclusion of the war, but the Soviets supported puppet governments in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in an attempt to separate parts of Iran. The attempt failed, and with political pressure from the U.S. on the U.S.S.R., in 1946 the Iranian Army recaptured both provinces. In the period between the end of the Second World War and the early 1960s, Iran witnessed major socioeconomic changes and political oscillations, some of which had a direct connection with nationalism. Most importantly, the Anglo-Iranian oil concession, which was left untouched during the reign of Reza Shah, led to an upsurge of Iranian nationalism in the early 1950s, otherwise known as the "Mosaddeq era."

The Mosaddeq era is characterized by many historians of contemporary Iran as the "Nationalist" *époque*. But the nationalism promoted in this era was political, thus qualitatively different from the historical nationalism such as that of the Irānvîj group (above), which stressed the history and culture of ancient Iran. When in the early 1950s a group of Iranians with Mohammad Mossadeq as their leader adopted the title *Mellîyun* (Nationalists) and established a party called *Jebhe-ye Mellî* (National Front), their principal objective was to eliminate the control of the British over Iran's oil and the influence of the so-called thousand families over Iranian affairs.⁸³ The political nationalism of the Mosaddeq era, however, hoped to revive Iran's great past by diverting oil revenues from the British pocket to

⁸¹ For a review, see Zakeri 1993.

⁸² Farshidvard 1993, 345–54.

⁸³ Cottam 1978, 211.

Iran's. Although Mosaddeq and nationalists in his party succeeded in nationalizing the oil industry and ejecting the British from Iranian soil once and for all, they failed to anticipate the upcoming crisis. As Mosaddeq drifted from his original path and the threat of the leftist Tudeh party became imminent, in 1953 the nationalist government fell to a coup d'état sponsored by the CIA and MI-6, with the American architectural historian, Donald N. Wilber (1907–1997), allegedly as one of its covert designers.⁸⁴

Wilber received his doctorate in architecture from Princeton University in 1949. After working as an artist for the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in Egypt, and as an architect for excavations in Syria, Greece, and France in the 1930s, he served in a number of academic positions, including the Asia Institute in New York, where he met Arthur Upham Pope. After his initial visit to Iran in 1934, Wilber became involved with Iranian archaeology and made several surveys of Islamic structures with Pope. He worked with the Office of Strategic Services in Iran during the Second World War. In 1964 he served as the adviser to the government of Afghanistan, and from 1960 to 1970 as the Chairman of the Iran Foundation in New York. Wilber authored several books and articles on contemporary Iran and the art and architecture of Iran in Islamic times, including the monumental *The Islamic Architecture of Iran and Turan: The Timurid Period*.⁸⁵ Other books by Wilber, especially *Iran: Past and Present*, which between its original publication in 1948 and 1981 reached nine editions, were influential in promoting Iranian nationalism.

Wilber was a member of the CIA from 1948 to 1970. In 1952, he was the political attaché of the United States embassy in Tehran and a consultant to the State Department and the Institute for Defense Analysis. On his role in the Operation AJAX (the CIA code name for the coup against Mosaddeq), Wilber wrote:⁸⁶

The fact of the matter is that I was the principal planner for Operation AJAX and was given authority to prepare an operational plan. . . . Drawing on a variety of sources, we [Wilber and Kermit Roosevelt] began preparing propaganda material in Persian directed against Mossadeq. It included cartoons, small wall posters, short articles. Given high priority, it poured off the [Central Intelligence] Agency's press and was rushed by air to Tehran, where it was stored

for distribution at the proper moment. In preparing the plan of operation, we realized that [Mohammad Reza] Shah would not dismiss Mossadeq unless pressured to do so. Pressure was applied, and he did issue an imperial decree dismissing Mossadeq and another naming General Zahedi as Prime Minister. . . . Our principal agents handed out thousands of copies of Shah's decree, our propaganda material flooded Tehran, clandestine papers appeared, raids were mounted on Tudeh Party offices and presses. On August 19 [1953] loyalist mobs were collected in southern Tehran and were led into the modern quarters, where they swept along soldiers and officers. General Zahedi emerged from hiding to climb into a tank and be taken to the radio station, where he proclaimed the new government.

The 1953 coup put an end to the political nationalism of the Mosaddeq era. In the decade that followed the coup, Mohammad Reza Shah emerged as the absolute ruler of the country, with little concern for either the constitution or the Majles. Backed by rising oil prices and foreign investment, especially U.S. support, Mohammad Reza Shah fostered an improper Westernization and poorly planned industrialization of the country, which he called the "White Revolution."⁸⁷ Factories mushroomed without sufficient economic or industrial infrastructure, imports skyrocketed at the expense of the local craft production, while land and social amelioration in the early 1960s put the Shah into a collision course with the clergy, especially with Ayatollah Khomeini.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed such a major growth in archaeological activities that one scholar has been prompted to describe it as "the Explosive Phase" in Iranian archaeology.⁸⁸ Many expeditions embarked on fieldwork in Iran from European countries, the United States, Canada, and Japan. In addition, the Archaeological Service of Iran, now an established organization, contributed considerably to archaeological fieldwork in Iran. Furthermore, the Department of Archaeology of Tehran University under Ezat O. Negahban began to play a more profound role in archaeological research in Iran, both by undertaking its own projects and training archaeologists to serve in the Archaeological Service of Iran. Following Robert Adams' pioneering survey, Khuzestan became an important focus of research, especially to anthropologically oriented archaeologists, who introduced the "New Archaeology" to Iranian archaeology.⁸⁹ By the mid to late

⁸⁴ Wilber 1986; Risen 2000.

⁸⁵ Wilber and Golombek 1987.

⁸⁶ Wilber 1986, 188–9.

⁸⁷ Pahlavi 1967.

⁸⁸ Young 1986, 284.

⁸⁹ Hole 1995.

1970s, the new approach was widespread in Iranian archaeology, with focus gradually shifting from single-site excavations to regional surveys, and more attention paid to other archaeological material besides architectural remains and *objets d'art*. The foundation of the Center for Archaeological Research within the Archaeological Service of Iran under Firouz Baqerzadeh in 1972 and its sponsorship of annual meetings of all archaeologists working in Iran marked the pinnacle of archaeology in Iran prior to the Revolution of 1979.

The archaeological research by academically trained archaeologists from Iran and abroad in the 1960s and 1970s had the professional discipline to free itself from nationalist biases. Indeed, very little in the archaeological literature of this period seems to convey particularly nationalist connotations.⁹⁰ There was, however, another current in Iranian politics and among the intelligentsia that continued to promote such sentiments. This current was heir to the patriotism of the Reza Shah era, and following the same agenda, was trying to foster an ideology of nationalism by evoking the glories of pre-Islamic Iran, especially the Achaemenid and Sasanian periods. Partially as a result of this, excavations were resumed at Persepolis and Pasargadae, two major Achaemenid capitals, and Bishapur, the capital of Sasanian emperor Shapur I, while extensive conservation and reconstruction were undertaken at Persepolis. Not surprisingly, the impact of this current was more effectively felt in Iranian politics.

Iranian kingship of the Islamic period was traditionally associated with the Islamic *shari'a*, with the king as the defender and protector of Islam. But

after confrontations with religious bodies, especially Ayatollah Khomeini in the early 1960s, Mohammad Reza Shah increasingly distanced himself from religious institutions. As their influence, especially the clergy, was curbed by the State in the 1960s and 1970s, Mohammad Reza Shah sought other means to legitimize his sovereignty. It has been argued that invoking pre-Islamic values by Mohammad Reza Shah was a means to achieve this.⁹¹ Indeed, stress on nationalism and pre-Islamic values and traditions had proven to be an important asset in the time of his father, Reza Shah. Therefore, Mohammad Reza Shah made a great effort to present himself as the latest in a long line of great Iranian kings extending back to his favorite ruler, Cyrus II (the Great). Like his father, who chose Pahlavi as his family name to emphasize his links with pre-Islamic Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah added another historical title, *Āryāmehr* (the light of the Aryans), to his many titles.

The state-sponsored attempt to marginalize Islam in favor of the supposed pre-Islamic values and traditions provoked criticism from both the clergy and the liberal Islamic thinkers. Morteza Motahhari, an established Islamic theoretician, published a book emphasizing the dynamic historical interaction between Islam and Iran,⁹² while Ali Shari'ati, one of the early advocates of Islamic political and social ideology, gave talks at Hoseini-ye Ershad in Tehran urging Iranians to abandon Western and pre-Islamic traditions and return to their true Shiite self: "The experts may know a great deal about the Sasanians, the Achaemenids, and even the earlier civilizations, but our people know nothing about such things. Our people do not find their roots in these civilizations.

⁹⁰ There were only a handful of Iranian archaeologists in these years who expressed nationalist sentiments in their writings, among them Ali Sami and Ali-Akbar Sarfaraz. Ali Sami (1910–1989) was born to a learned Shirazi family. He was serving as a teacher in his home town when he met Erich Schmidt in 1936 and became involved in work at Persepolis. After Schmidt's departure, he served as an assistant for Hosein Ravanbod, and in 1941 replaced him as the director of the Persepolis excavations, to be continued until 1949 and from 1952 to 1961. In the interval (1949–1951), Sami excavated at Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus II (the Great). Sami authored more than 50 books and articles on various aspects of ancient Iranian civilization (see A. Mousavi 1990), including *The Achaemenid Civilization* in three volumes (Sami 1962–1969) and *The Sasanian Civilization* in two volumes (Sami 1963–1965). Both books are a tour de force of available knowledge on these two periods of Iranian history. In his introduction to the first volume of *The Achaemenid Civilization*, Sami (1962, 3–4) elaborated on his motivation for undertaking such a project: "The ancient people of this land [Iran] enjoyed a prosperous culture and art. Although historical events and the passage of time have

destroyed a great deal of their remains, those bits and pieces left, nonetheless, testify to that glorious culture. It would be unfair that we neglect the struggles of our ancestors and fail to respect their efforts by not preserving their remains. . . . Thus the author [Sami], like other pioneers of the discipline, have dedicated several years of his life to accomplish this task. . . . This effort was not a result of anything but a love of motherland and praise of the valuable remains of the ancestors."

Ali Akbar Sarfaraz was the one who resumed excavations at the Sasanian city of Bishapur. In the introduction to his excavation report at a monumental structure of the Achaemenid date, presumably from the time of Cyrus II, near Borazjan, Sarfaraz (1971, 19), wrote: "It is with great pleasure that with the auspicious celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the foundation of the Iranian Empire and the year of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the glorious world empire, the Iranian archaeological expedition discovered and introduced one of the precious remains and an example of architectural genius of this magnificent king on the shores of the Persian Gulf."

⁹¹ Smith n.d.

⁹² Motahhari 1970.



Fig. 4. Pasargadae, October 1971. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi at the tomb of Cyrus the Great.

They are left unmoved by the heroes, geniuses, myths, and monuments of these ancient empires. Our people remember nothing from this distant past and do not care to learn about pre-Islamic civilizations. Consequently, for us to return to our roots means not a rediscovery of pre-Islamic Iran, but a return to our Islamic, especially Shiite, roots.”⁹³

None of these criticisms, however, deterred Mohammad Reza Shah from his grandiose plans to revive Iran’s pre-Islamic glories, with himself at the zenith of the imperial Iran. Following this path, in 1967 Mohammad Reza Shah received an official coronation, and four years later masterminded a ceremony described by one observer as “The Show of Shows,”⁹⁴ or perhaps, one of the biggest abuses of

archaeology and ancient history by modern politics. In October 1971, Mohammad Reza Shah held an ostentatious ceremony at Persepolis to celebrate the 2,500th anniversary of the foundation of the Persian empire by Cyrus the Great (fig. 4).⁹⁵ Heads of all governments were invited to the ceremony, presumably to reenact the scene on the Apadana stairway showing emissaries from nations subject to the Achaemenid empire bringing tribute to the Persian king. Many fell into the trap: one emperor, nine kings, three ruling princes, two crown princes, 13 presidents, 10 sheiks, and two sultans showed up, while some more observant heads of states cleverly excused themselves and sent their vice presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, or ambassadors.⁹⁶ The

⁹³ Quoted in Abrahamian 1982, 470.

⁹⁴ *Time*, October 25, 1971, 32–3.

⁹⁵ The year 1350 A.H. (1970–1971) was already labeled as “the year of the Cyrus the Great.” The celebration also marked the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Pahlavi dynasty, the 30th anniversary of Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign, and the 10th anniversary of the “White Revolution.”

⁹⁶ Like every other head of state, President Georges Pompidou of France was also invited, but he refused to come.

Shawcross (1988, 39) writes that Pompidou did not come because Mohammad Reza Shah refused to let him sit above Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia, and Francophone heads of states. Mozaffar Firouz, one of the Iranian dissidents in Paris, claims that he advised Georges Pompidou against attending this ceremony (Dolatchah-Firouz 1990, 479–80). In any event, Pompidou’s refusal to attend the ceremony offended the Shah and soured Franco-Iranian relations.

guests were housed in an encampment of tents designed and made by the French decorator Jansen. The rest of the paraphernalia also came from Paris, and the Maxim restaurant was entrusted with catering the food and beverages, all coming from Paris except for the caviar. The day after the banquet and the fireworks display, the guests sat down on the Persepolis platform and watched as the Iranian Army units—bidden to shave for the past few months so that their beards could be trimmed to resemble those of ancient warriors—paraded in front of them dressed as the armies of Iranian dynasties from the Achaemenids to the Pahlavis. The official biographer of the Queen Farah later described the scene:⁹⁷

The tight crippled beards of the Medes and the Persians; the small pointed beards of the Safavids, or the fierce moustaches of Qajar troops. Shields, lances, pennons, broadswords and daggers of earlier warrior's, all were there. Beneath a scorching sun, but shielded by parasols for those in need, the guests, who were seated on a rostrum below the pillared ruins of Cyrus' [sic] might, watched this impressive defile. Achaemenian foot guards, Parthian warriors, the cavalry of Xerxes, litters, chariots, tanks, Bactrian camels. Fath Ali Shah's artillery, warriors from the Caspian or the Persian Gulf, the Air Force, the new Women's contingents of the armed forces . . . all were there; all attested to Iran's glories, past and present.

But the high point of the ceremony was when Mohammad Reza Shah stood before the tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae and addressed him in a flat but emotional voice:

To you Cyrus, Great King, King of Kings, from Myself, Shahanshah of Iran, and from my people, Hail!

We are here at the moment when Iran renews its pledge to History to bear witness to immense gratitude of an entire people to you, immortal Hero of History, founder of world's oldest empire, great liberator of all time, worthy son of mankind.

Cyrus[,] we stand before your eternal dwelling place and speak these solemn words: Sleep in peace forever, for we are awake and we remain to watch over your glorious heritage.⁹⁸

With an estimated cost of between 200 and 300 million dollars, while parts of Iran were suffering from famine and the average per capita income was about \$500, the ceremony soon provoked massive criticism. One of the Shah's ambassadors later cynically called the ceremony "some Technicolor epic of Cecil. B. DeMille's . . . being projected onto the screen of the vast plain."⁹⁹ Some Iranians resented

the ceremony for its excessive costs, while others, including the Queen, were unhappy that it was so much French and so little Iranian. For some historical nationalists the ceremony was a fictional recreation of Iranian history and a naive attempt by Mohammad Reza Shah to elevate himself to the level of the great kings of ancient Iran by placing his brief dynasty on a par with the Achaemenids and Sasanians. Others described it as self-aggrandizement by a megalomaniac and a cause for international humiliation and embarrassment for Iranians in general.¹⁰⁰ But perhaps the most fierce criticism came from Ayatollah Khomeini in exile in Iraq. In a declaration issued on 31 October 1971, he wrote: "Are millions of *tumans* [Iranian currency] of the people's wealth to be spent on these frivolous and absurd celebrations? Are the people of Iran to have a festival for those whose behavior has been a scandal throughout history and who are a cause of crime and oppression, of abomination and corruption, in the present age?"¹⁰¹

The Persepolis ceremony proved to be more of a liability than an asset for the Pahlavi government. It failed to bring Mohammad Reza Shah either the international prestige or national respect that he expected. Less than eight years after the ceremony and two years after the extravagant celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Pahlavi dynasty, the Revolution of 1979 toppled the monarchy in Iran. During the revolution, the Persepolis ceremony was frequently recalled as an example of intolerable Pahlavi excess. Footage from the ceremony was occasionally played on national television in the first few years after the revolution to remind the people of the despotism they had overthrown.

NATIONALISM AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNDER THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

There is no need to discuss here the causes or outcomes of the Revolution of 1979, but it should be stressed that no event in the recent history of Iran transformed the political structure of the country as deeply as the revolution. Beginning from 7 January 1978, when the revolution was triggered by the publication of an article insulting Ayatollah Khomeini in a daily newspaper, Iran was gradually engulfed in an extensive series of demonstrations, strikes, and riots. Mohammad Reza Shah's departure and Ayatollah Khomeini's subsequent return to Iran in January to February of 1979 accelerated

⁹⁷ Blanch 1978, 134.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Shawcross 1988, 46–7.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Shawcross 1988, 44.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Firouz 1971.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Algar 1981, 202.

the revolution. On 11 February 1979, after a few days of street fighting between the revolutionaries and the last military troops loyal to the Shah, the Pahlavi government collapsed.

The elimination of the monarchy was frequently stressed as the revolution's primary goal. As early as 1971, in the famous declaration, "The Incompatibility of Monarchy with Islam," against the celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the foundation of the Persian empire, Ayatollah Khomeini stated:

God only knows what disasters the Iranian monarchy has given rise [to] since its beginning and what crimes it has committed. The crimes of [the] kings of Iran have blackened the pages of history. It is the kings of Iran that have constantly ordered massacres of their own people and had pyramids built with their skulls. . . . Tradition relates that the Prophet (upon whom be peace) said that the title King of Kings, which is born by the monarchs of Iran, is the most hated of all titles in the sight of God. Islam is fundamentally opposed to the whole notion of monarchy. Anyone who studies the manner in which the Prophet established the government of Islam will realize that Islam came in order to destroy these palaces of tyranny. Monarchy is one of the most shameful and disgraceful reactionary manifestations.¹⁰²

The impact of the new regime's anti-monarchical stance on Iranian society was profound. In the first few years after the revolution, anything associated with monarchy was despised, the noun '*shah*' was removed from many words or replaced with nouns such as *Islam* or *Imam* (e.g., Shahabad was changed to Islamabad, and Bandar-e Shah was renamed Bandar-e Imam). The government even made an attempt to abolish the Nowruz festival or shorten the new year holidays, but gave up after serious objections by the general public. Textbooks, especially those on the history of Iran, were rewritten,¹⁰³ emphasizing the Islamic period and religious figures and movements, marginalizing pre-Islamic times as the age of ignorance, and chastizing Iranian kings as oppressive despots. Pre-Islamic monuments were recalled not as sources of national pride, but as symbols of monarchical tyranny imposed on the masses.

In harmony with this antagonism toward Iran's past, nationalism was widely rejected as an askew Western concept promoted by colonialist powers and "Westoxicated" (*gharbzadeh*) intellectuals. The term *mellat* (nation) gave way to *ommat* (the Muslim

community), and Iranian nationalism was rejected in favor of pan-Islamic agendas, emphasizing brotherhood among Muslims of the world. As soon as the Islamic government was stabilized, nationalists were suppressed along with the leftists and royalists. After a short period of remembrance with admiration, Mohammad Mosaddeq, the symbol of Iranian political nationalism, was discredited and his opponent, Ayatollah Kashani, was eulogized.¹⁰⁴

Fortunately, antagonism toward Iran's past never materialized into action. Although many government buildings, banks, liquor stores, and a number of foreign embassies were attacked by the revolutionaries throughout 1978, there is no tangible evidence that any museums or archaeological or historical sites were vandalized.¹⁰⁵ The rumors of an attempt to bulldoze Persepolis by a mob led by one of the early revolutionary figures in the first few weeks after the revolution was never officially confirmed or denied; however, the damage had been done. The character of archaeology in Iran had suffered enormously from the self-serving demonstrations by the Pahlavi government. Consequently, the new ideology interpreted archaeology as nothing more than a pseudoscience in service of the court to glorify despotism and justify royal oppression of the masses, both inherently against the new belief system. Accordingly, archaeology fell into disfavor. The Department of Archaeology of Tehran University, the only academic institution teaching archaeology in Iran at the time, was temporarily closed during the Cultural Revolution (1979–1982), with an attempt to abolish or incorporate it into the History Department only dropped after objections by professors of archaeology. The Institute of Archaeology of Tehran University survived only nominally, not to resume its activities until 1990. In a general sweep, most foreign archaeologists were indicted as agents and forbidden from working in Iran, while some Iranian archaeologists were forced to retire or leave the country. Although the Archaeological Service and the Office for Protection and Preservation of Historical Remains both remained functional, for the first few years after the revolution, archaeological activities dwindled to only a few operations per year, mostly of urgent or salvage nature. Problem-oriented research ceased, and archaeology became a mere bureaucratic activity.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Quoted in Algar 1981, 202.

¹⁰³ Mehran 1989.

¹⁰⁴ Akhavi 1980, 175–6.

¹⁰⁵ According to rumors, during the street fights in February of 1979, the Golestan Palace was broken into and a few items, including a sword of Nader Shah, were taken. A curator of the palace went immediately to the revolutionary officials and asked

for their help. It was announced immediately on the radio that this should not have happened and these objects belong to people. All the stolen objects were returned the next day.

¹⁰⁶ For a summary of archaeological activities between 1979 and 1984, see the Archaeological Service of Iran 1983; Deputy for Protection and Preservation 1984.

It took almost 10 years for archaeology in Iran to recover. On 30 January 1985 the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization (ICHO) was formed by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran by incorporating the Center for Archaeological Research, Center for Traditional Crafts, Center and Museum of Ethnography, Office for Historical Remains, Iran Bastan Museum, Office for Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the Provinces, Office of the Museums, Office of Historical Structures, Office of Palaces, National Center for Protection of Iranian Antiquities, and Office of the Golestan Palace Endowments. On 22 April 1988, the Majles ratified the constitution of the ICHO. The ICHO, initially working under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education and later under the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, was entrusted with extensive responsibilities over recovery, protection, preservation, and introduction of archaeological and historical remains in its broadest sense. In order to achieve this, the ICHO originally consisted of four deputies: Deputy for Research, supervising Offices for Archaeological, Ethnographic, Folk Arts, and Epigraphic Research; Deputy for Protection and Preservation of Archaeological and Historical Remains; Deputy for Introduction and Education; and Deputy for Administration and Finance.

In September 1996, the ICHO was transformed into a research institute. The former Offices in the Deputy for Research were transformed into five distinct research centers: Center for Archaeological Research, Center for Research on Languages and Dialects, Center for Ethnographic Research, Center for Architecture and Cultural-Historical Monuments, and Center for Conservation Research.¹⁰⁷ The ICHO now functions under the supervision of the Council of Research, consisting of the Director of ICHO, the Deputy for Research, Directors of Research Centers, and three to five established scholars from universities or other research institutes. In the Summer of 1997, the Center for Archaeological Research developed three departments to design, organize, and undertake research on prehistoric, historic, and Islamic periods.

The foundation of the ICHO in 1985 marks the beginning of a new era in archaeological activities in Iran. Shortly after its foundation, the ICHO established offices in centers of all provinces, with subsidiary offices in major towns. Registration of archaeological and historical sites gained momen-

tum, and guards, operating from provincial and regional offices, were assigned to protect archaeological sites. Moreover, local societies were formed in rural areas for protection of archaeological and historical sites. Clandestine excavations and looting of archaeological and historical sites, which had become an ordinary activity in remote areas in the early years after the revolution, were widely prevented, antiquities dealing was outlawed, and in 1990 the Government launched a massive crackdown against illegal diggers and antiquities dealers. Antiquities stores were closed, hundreds were arrested, tens of thousands of artifacts were confiscated, and a few staff members of some foreign embassies, allegedly related to illegal diggers and antiquities dealers, were expelled from the country.

The ICHO resumed problem-oriented archaeological research in Iran. Since 1990, archaeological activities have increased considerably. Several large-scale national projects involving survey, excavation, and conservation were designed, only two of which, Hamedan and Soltaniyeh, are now operating on an annual basis. In addition, some projects of smaller scale, including excavations at Bandiyan, are now operating on a regular basis. Furthermore, for the first time after the revolution, a joint ICHO-Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago expedition conducted some surveys in north-western Fars in March 1995,¹⁰⁸ followed by a joint excavation at Chogha Bonut in Susiana in September–October 1996,¹⁰⁹ and a joint Iranian-German excavation at Arisman in April–May 2000.

The ICHO has also sponsored two symposia on archaeological research in Iran, the first at Susa on 14–17 April 1994,¹¹⁰ and the second in Tehran on 18–21 November 1997.¹¹¹ These symposia furnished Iranian archaeologists with an opportunity to meet and discuss the latest results of their research and problems in Iranian archaeology. The second symposium was followed by the inauguration of a new series, *Archaeological Reports of Iran (ARI)*, the official periodical of the Center for Archaeological Research, primarily concerned with making reports of field archaeological projects available to the public. *ARI* will join the small family of journals published by ICHO: *Mirās-e Farhangi* (1989–), *Asar* (1980–), and *Muzehā* (1980–), as well as the *Iranian Journal of Archaeology and History* (published by Iran University Press, 1986–).

In addition to the Department of Archaeology at Tehran University, long the sole academic cen-

¹⁰⁷ In November 2000 a sixth center for Paleoanthropological and Paleolithic Research was established.

¹⁰⁸ Alizadeh 1995.

¹⁰⁹ Alizadeh 1997.

¹¹⁰ M. Mousavi 1998.

¹¹¹ Chegini 1997.

ter for teaching archaeology in Iran, there are now archaeology departments in several other Iranian universities, including Tarbiyat-e Modarres University (M.A. and Ph.D. degrees), Free Universities at Abhar and Kazerun (B.A.), and Tehran (M.A.), and Zahedan University and Bu-Ali University in Hamedan (B.A.). The ICHO has also its own training center, with B.A. degrees in several fields including archaeology, museum studies, and ethnography.

NATIONALISM IN IRAN TODAY

The hostility toward history and nationalism that characterized the Revolution of 1979 was inherently incompatible with the Iranian culture. As revolutionary enthusiasm diminished, nationalism and concern for history returned. As early as January 1981, only two years after the revolution, some scholars called for a rapprochement with history.¹¹² Since the mid 1980s, with the formation of several institutions—both private and government-sponsored—devoted to the study of history, and the opening of many private and public archives, historical studies were rekindled and received enthusiastic response from both publishers and the general public.¹¹³ But a review of the historical literature published in Iran in the past few years¹¹⁴ shows that pre-Islamic Iran has benefited very little from the recent enthusiasm, and the majority of historical studies is concerned with Iran in recent centuries.

The new Islamic regime also slowly mellowed in its antagonism toward pre-Islamic Iran. Officials gradually began to participate in national ceremonies, spoke in support of protection of national heritage, and paid visits to historical sites and museums. Reconciliation with Persepolis, however, came at last, when on 20 April 1991 President Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani paid a visit to Persepolis and wrote in the guest book:

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate

Visiting the incredible remains at Persepolis provokes considerable national pride in every individual. By seeing these remains, our people will discover their own capabilities and the cultural background of their country, and will believe that they will recover their historical role in the future to uphold upon this talent and foundation, the blazing torch of Islam to light the path of other nations.¹¹⁵

For the revival of nationalism, the Iraqi invasion in September of 1980 perhaps provided a crucial impetus. Patriotism was a potentially powerful contribution from the nonreligious segments of the Iranian society to the war effort against Iraq,¹¹⁶ a contribution that the Islamic government reluctantly, but silently accepted. Not surprisingly, the nationalism that emerged in Iran during the war with Iraq demonstrates some of the features that characterized Iranian nationalism in earlier periods. Xenophobia and anguish over foreign invasions of Iran are among the most noteworthy aspects of contemporary Iranian nationalism. With the passage of time, as the Revolution of 1979 is slowly becoming an event in Iran's history, and especially since the election of President Mohammad Khatami in May 1997 and the ensuing social reforms, the early revolutionary idealism is giving way to other concerns, including nationalism and Iranian identity.¹¹⁷

The historical nationalism that was dormant for a few years after the revolution is flourishing again. Among the issues targeted by the contemporary Iranian historical nationalism are, not surprisingly, the two major events in Iranian history: the Greek-Macedonian invasion and the fall of the Achaemenid empire in 330 B.C.E., and the Arab invasion and the fall of the Sassanian empire in 651 C.E. While under the Islamic Republic, implicit criticism of the Arab invasion and Iranian conversion to Islam may prove to be hazardous; at least one reputable scholar has tried to present an alternative reconstruction.¹¹⁸ The other argument—rejecting Alexander's campaign in Iran—as an actual historical event,¹¹⁹ however, seeks its roots in the historical nationalism of the 1950s and 1960s, and largely emanates from hardcore nationalist feelings rather than professional historiography.

Last, but not least, in the past few years the debate over the name of the Persian Gulf has become contentious among Iranians intellectuals, including archaeologists.¹²⁰ Needless to say, increasing attempts to distort the name of the Persian Gulf has greatly offended Iranians. What Iranians find particularly disturbing is that these attempts are incited by the Arabs and supported by a number of Western scholars working in Arab countries. In a recent paper, Majidzadeh traced the archaeologi-

¹¹² Cf. Rajabi 1981; Takmil Homayun 1981.

¹¹³ Amanat 1989.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Ettehadiieh and Mir Mohammad Sadeq 1997.

¹¹⁵ Reprinted in *Mirās-e Farhangi* 2 (3–4), 5.

¹¹⁶ Brown 1990, 19–20, 88.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Soroush 1996.

¹¹⁸ Hassuri 1992.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Hami 1984.

¹²⁰ Cf. Azarnoush 1993; Majidzadeh 1993; Abdi 1994b, 1995.

cal connection of the attempts to change the name of the Persian Gulf and criticized foreign archaeologists who switched from Persian Gulf to one of the illegitimate names after their fieldwork in Iran was disrupted after the Revolution of 1979.¹²¹

CONCLUSION

Nationalism and archaeology were both imported into Iran in the 19th century by Western-educated Iranians or the introduction of Western concepts and disciplines into the Iranian society. Not surprisingly, for average Iranians, to whom the past was a living projection of the present, both archaeology and nationalism were difficult to comprehend. The past and its physical remains were scarcely considered a subject worthy of scholarly investigation, only as objects of antiquarian curiosity or monetary greed.

Nationalism, on the other hand, was a direct reaction to external interference that characterizes past and recent Iranian history. It was only natural that with these premises, both archaeology and nationalism would face obstacles as they developed. Nationalism led to political manipulation and naive chauvinism, while archaeology went through several stages of metamorphosis to emerge as an established scientific inquiry. In the meantime, the development of nationalism and the study of ancient history in Iran are marked by symptom of an old chronic despondency, that is, seeking external scapegoats for internal perplexities that occasionally put Iranian culture into critical situations.¹²² Starting from pre-Islamic times, the Greeks or the Arabs were blamed for destroying the Achaemenid and Sasanian empires, ignoring the internal problems these two imperial systems faced. In times closer to ours, the British, the Russians, and the Americans were resented for their interference in Iranian affairs and blamed them for many domestic problems.

Although the old habit is still alive in some quarters, a new trend in Iranian scholarship is beginning to look inward, to seek internal problems that have led to the decline of Iran in the recent past. Owing to its pivotal place in Iranian culture, students of the Persian language are the first to ask the relevant questions. The shortcomings of Persian in coping with an avalanche of new concepts and terms that marks our era is no longer described as a conspiracy to corrupt the symbol of Iranian national identity, but is diagnosed as Persian speakers' preoccupa-

tion with humanities rather than sciences, which require development of specialized terminology and prose.¹²³ In the field of historiography, the old conspiracy theories are slowly giving way to more realistic studies based on internal elements of Iranian history.¹²⁴ In this transitional period in Iranian scholarship, archaeology and the study of ancient history have proven to be more resistant to this new critical perspective. One should bear in mind that archaeology and the study of ancient history suffered the most from the Revolution of 1979. Thus it is understandable that they might be the last to emerge from the post-revolutionary coma, and, despite considerable quantitative increase, both are still among the fields with the fewest practitioners. In the future, the revolution that is occurring in the humanities in Iran at the moment may extend to archaeology and the study of ancient Iran, and subsequently to the character of Iranian nationalism.

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¹²¹ Majidzadeh 1993.

¹²² Ashraf 1992.

¹²³ Cf. various papers in Kafi 1993; see also Najafi 1992.

¹²⁴ For a review of examples, see Amanat 1989.

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